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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 USUN NEW YORK 001544

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STATE FOR PM A/S HILLEN

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KPKO](#) [UNSC](#) [IS](#) [LE](#)

SUBJECT: UNIFIL FORCE GENERATION UPDATE

Classified By: Ambassador John R. Bolton, per 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) chaired a meeting of UNIFIL Troop Contributing Countries (TCC) on Friday August 11 and two follow-on "technical meetings" on Saturday August 12 and Monday August 14 with both current and potential contributors. The purpose of these meetings was to discuss next steps required to quickly generate and deploy a beefed-up force for UNIFIL. DPKO discussed force needs in general terms and addressed several specific concerns of existing UNIFIL TCCs. During a separate bilateral meeting on August 15, a DPKO official shared with USUN a notional plan for force generation planning purposes which was developed for internal UN use following informal contacts between the UN Secretariat and various countries, and informed by DPKO assumptions. With the caveat that no country has provided a formal commitment thus far, this notional plan envisions France, Ghana, India, and Turkey as providing at least two battalions each) consisting of mechanized infantry and/or infantry troops) while Indonesia, Italy, and Spain would provide one battalion each. DPKO would welcome an exchange of information with the USG about potential troop contributions. (Note: PM A/S Hillen will meet with DPKO August 16-17.) USUN also confirmed that DPKO U/SYG Guehenno is in discussions with Germany about the possibility of German bilateral assistance to the GOL)- independent of the UNIFIL force structure -- to help secure Lebanon's border with Syria to prevent the rearmament of Hizballah. DPKO will convene another meeting of NY-based representatives of potential TCCs on August 17 to brief on the proposed Concept of Operations, Rules of Engagement, and force generation needs. A decision on French participation is crucial for DPKO to complete its plan. End Summary.

DPKO Requests Help With Planning

¶2. (C) During recent meetings with current and potential TCCs, DPKO asked member states to provide a team of 4 - 5 military planners to augment current DPKO staff. (NOTE: US is providing one officer in accordance with DPKO's request who will arrive o/a August 18. As of August 15, we understand that France and Italy have already provided officers for this team. Retired French Brigadier Francois Dureau, currently serving as the head of DPKO's situation center, has already been dispatched to Beirut to liaise with UNIFIL Force Commander Pellegrini. END NOTE.) The planners would assist in finalizing the plan and then some of them would deploy as part of a larger advance party. There is no firm timeline

thus far for initial force deployment but the DPKO plan now is to deploy a planning team to UNIFIL HQ in Naqoura o/a August 27 in order to facilitate an initial force of two or three battalions that would be the lead elements. The team would consist of a team of DPKO officers augmented by some of the military planning officers to be provided by member states. As to next steps, DPKO hopes to complete the Concept of Operations (CONOPS) by midweek and to present the proposed CONOPS, Rules of Engagement, and other DPKO thinking at a "formal" TCC of NY-based representatives on Thursday August 17.

Generic Force Needs

¶3. (U) Without going into numbers, DPKO previewed on August 11 and 12 what they would ask for in the force generation phase: mechanized infantry units, combat engineers to facilitate mobility, ground and air recon, transportation assets (light/medium trucks), utility helicopters and a level two hospital. There will be a need at the outset for Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) and demining units which will be critical to facilitate rapid return of IDPs. There should also be a maritime component to the operation for interdiction purposes. Additionally DPKO wants to establish a UNIFIL Liaison Team of two or three officers in Beirut. They also plans to set up a "hot line" between UNIFIL, the IDF and the LAF, and would like to establish regular mil-to-mil meetings between UNIFIL, the IDF and the LAF.

¶4. (C) Some existing UNIFIL TCCs, particularly India, continue to voice concerns about their current troop deployments and what is going to be required of them in the near term. The representative from the Indian mission has repeatedly pointed out that no one should expect the existing

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UNIFIL to take on the new mandate until additional forces are deployed, and that no one should assume that the existing TCCs would continue to participate in the new UNIFIL. During the August 11 meeting, DPKO USG Guehenno pointed out that all TCCs would be consulted about follow-on participation, and in the meantime their troops would not be expected to carry out new mandates in UNIFIL's existing configuration.

DPKO Seeks Collaboration with USG

¶5. (C) During a separate meeting August 15, Special Assistant to U/SYG Guehenno Salman Ahmed (protect) showed USUN a notional internal DPKO document outlining the types of contributions the Secretariat might expect from individual member states. Ahmed said the document reflects DPKO's assessment of member state capabilities as well as a sense of what these states might be prepared) with some cajoling by the USG and other interested parties) to contribute. The document suggested France, Ghana, India, and Turkey might be called upon to provide at least two battalions) consisting of mechanized infantry and/or infantry troops) while Indonesia, Italy, and Spain might be asked to provide one battalion each. These countries, as well as Malaysia, Norway, Sweden, and China, might also be asked to contribute other kinds of forces besides infantry.

¶6. (C) Ahmed acknowledged that DPKO's force generation efforts will depend in large part on whether France decides to lead the expanded UNIFIL force. He expressed some frustration that the French military still had qualms about committing large numbers of new forces under a blue helmet lead, despite early political signs from Paris that France would play a primary role. Ahmed also referred to press report citing Italian officials who had expressed concerns that UN forces require approval from New York to open fire, which Ahmed said is categorically untrue. He appealed to the USG to remain in close touch with both France and Italy, as well as other contributors, to ensure that they play their

part in the new force, and described a press campaign by DPKO U/SYG Guehenno to update European audiences on DPKO practices and procedures.

¶7. (C) In addition to the countries listed on the notional internal DPKO document, Ahmed told Poloffs that Guehenno is in discussions with Germany about possible German bilateral assistance to Lebanon to secure its border with Syria to prevent rearmament of Hizballah, most likely by providing customs officials as well as a training and equipping program. Ahmed described his understanding that any Germany assistance would be independent of UNIFIL, and conveyed a reported German reluctance for German officials to be stationed on the Israeli-Lebanese border. He admitted that this proposal -- wherein UNIFIL would not be directly responsible for monitoring arms trafficking on the Syrian border -- was preferable to DPKO. USUN urged DPKO to consider how to support GOL efforts to ensure that arms will not be smuggled into Lebanon's air and seaports in order to reassure Israel and thereby facilitate their prompt reopening.

¶8. (C) Ahmed assured USUN that DPKO is firmly committed to ultimately generating a force of roughly 15,000 troops. Acknowledging earlier reports that A/SYG Annabi and DPKO Military Advisor General Mehta had determined that the enhanced UNIFIL force might be able to accomplish its mission with fewer soldiers (approximately 7-8,000), Ahmed confirmed that DPKO had received USUN's earlier message about the political sensitivity of suggesting a dramatically lower number. He noted that Mehta is worried about the initial absorptive capacity of UNIFIL and the LAF and is considering a rolling deployment. Of particular concern is how UNIFIL can help the LAF deploy given the current environment (e.g., destroyed bridges and roads). Ahmed said the TCC meeting on August 17 would focus on reassuring potential contributors that the UN would establish a clear command and control structure for the force, with robust Rules of Engagement and the necessary budgetary and equipment support. He also said DPKO would reassure current and potential TCCs that the mandate in UNSCR 1701 is sufficiently clear and flexible to enable the force to carry out its mission.

¶9. (C) Finally, Ahmed conveyed that DPKO's approach to the task of rapidly expanding and deploying UNIFIL was to move as

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fast as possible. He said this pace means it can't be business as usual at the UN, and that the UN would like USG support for DPKO to seek flexibility in such areas as procurement and authority to commit budgetary resources. He also said that DPKO is inclined to keep Pellegrini in place, noting the UNIFIL force commander has the confidence of all parties and that changing the leadership structure at this stage could delay deployment.

BOLTON